

Implementing Peer Review as part of the CQAF

*Scenarios for Peer Review Implementation in
Austria, Spain (Catalonia), Finland, Hungary, and Italy*

Imprint

**Peer Review Extended
Implementing the CQAF through Peer Review – Mutual Review and Assessment of VET Providers
and Extension of the European Peer Review Network
Leonardo da Vinci Project
(EAC/32/06/13)**

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I. Introduction

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, *öibf*

Before the launching of the projects "Peer Review in initial VET" and "Peer Review Extended" experience with Peer Review has been virtually non-existent in the countries contributing to this report, except for some experimentation with benchmarking (Finland) and internal audits by "Peers" as a "rehearsal" for ISO certification audits (Italy, Catalonia).

In the project "Peer Review in initial VET", a standard European Peer Review procedure was developed in a joint European effort. The procedure was tested in 15 transnational European Peer Reviews in eight European countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, and the United Kingdom) in 2006. An updated Peer Review procedure was published in June 2007 in the "European Peer Review Manual for initial VET" and translated into the eight languages of the partner countries.

The project "Peer Review Extended" sought to expand experience in Peer Review to new countries: Another set of four transnational European Peer Reviews were carried out in four countries (Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Spain/Catalonia) in 2007. Additionally, the project also aimed to investigate the contribution of Peer Review to the further development of the CQAF. A paper with the results of this investigation was drawn up (cf. Peer Review as an innovative methodology for external evaluation in VET – contribution to the further development of the "Common Quality Assurance Framework" (CQAF), ms., Vienna, August 2007).

Taking into account the interest prevailing in some countries to use Peer Review to extend the scope of their repertoire for quality assurance on the national level, one assignment in the "Peer Review Extended" project also centred on devising national scenarios for Peer Review implementation. At the basis of these scenarios were the experiences made in the two pilot phases (2006 and 2007) as well as ongoing development processes at the system level concerning implementation of the CQAF and investigation of possible external evaluation schemes as a next step after self-assessment.

Originally, the description of national Peer Review implementation scenarios had been planned for Austria, Finland, and Italy – countries which had already taken part in the first Peer Review project and where political support for Peer Review experimentation was strong. During the course of the project, the Hungarian and Catalan partners also joined the development of implementation scenarios for their countries.

By drawing up scenarios of Peer Review implementation in some vanguard countries, two objectives can be achieved: Firstly, actions for transfer of results on the national level are reported in order to show the impact of the Peer Review projects. Secondly, the scenarios can also assume a model function showing how Peer Review can be implemented, which approaches are used and which steps are taken. In a summary, a first list of critical success factors derived from the national scenarios provides general suggestions for Peer Review implementation which the project team hopes other countries will find useful.

II. Implementation of Peer Review as part of the CQAF – a Synopsis

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, *öibf*

II. 1 CQAF implementation in Austria, Spain (Catalonia), Finland, Hungary, and Italy

In all countries contributing to these guidelines, the CQAF has been introduced into the national quality assurance systems. Different approaches have been taken, though:

In Austria, the CQAF has been fully implemented in the comprehensive quality initiative QIBB which encompasses all actors and levels of the initial VET system in Austria (www.qibb.at). For continuing VET no overall quality assurance system has been adopted so far.

In Catalonia (Spain), the CQAF has been implemented through a voluntary national project "Qualitat I Millora Contínua als centres educatius" launched by the Department of Education. The project supports systematic quality management (following ISO 9001:2000 and the EFQM model) in the colleges involved and relies on networking between the colleges (currently twelve networks covering 70 initial VET colleges).

In Finland, the CQAF has become the basis for all national steering of VET. The "Quality Management recommendations for vocational education and training" which are directed at the VET providers constitute the main instrument to implement the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in VET in Finland.

In Hungary, the implementation of the CQAF has been implemented through the VET Development Strategy for the period of 2005 – 2013 and the Government Resolution no. 1057/2005 promoting the implementation of this Strategy, both adopted in May 2005. A broad quality improvement programme covering the VET system as a whole has been launched: First and foremost developments have taken place in the school-based vocational education and training sector – targeting the VET schools but also the local VET management in the municipalities – where an adapted Hungarian institutional framework is implemented. Additionally, a Concept Paper has been elaborated defining the conditions and tasks of implementing CQAF in the Hungarian adult training sector.

In Italy, the CQAF has been used on various levels: It is the basis for the planning model of VET activities adopted by regional governments and for a range of pilot initiatives for VET providers, e.g. the Quality Chart or the Guide on Self-Assessment. On the regional level, monitoring and evaluation systems using indicators follow the CQAF logic.

II. 2 Implementation of Peer Review – Status quo and Outlook

Before the start of the projects "Peer Review in initial VET" and "Peer Review Extended" experience with Peer Review has been virtually non-existent in all participating countries, except for some experimentation with benchmarking (Finland) and internal audits by "Peers" as a "rehearsal" for ISO certification audits (Italy, Catalonia). In Finland, Italy, and Catalonia quality networks of VET providers exist which can be used for Peer Review (cf. also Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2005). Given the fact that the final version of the **Peer Review procedure** has only been available **since June 2007, the implementation schemes in the contributing countries are already quite advanced:**

In Austria, there are concrete plans to implement Peer Review within the quality initiative QIBB in the initial VET sector starting 2008: A feasibility study will be carried out 2008 while at the same time the first nucleus of a Peer Review network will be established and national Peer Reviews will be piloted.

In Catalonia (Spain), the Peer Review methodology will be integrated into the national quality project "Qualitat I Millora Contínua als centres educatius" in which mutual audits in a network of 70 schools are already practised.

In Finland, Peer Review is one of the quality assurance activities advocated by the "Quality Management recommendations for vocational education and training". Implementation by VET providers will occur on a voluntary basis.

In Hungary, the piloting of Peer Review in about 20 VET schools has been included in the 2008 Work Programme of the Quality Management Component of the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools. A network of 70 schools established to support the self-assessment process through horizontal learning can serve as a starting point for a Peer Review network.

In Italy, the establishment of a Peer Review supra-regional network of vocational and technical schools and regional VET centres to support the voluntary conduct of Peer Reviews is proposed.

In all countries, **dissemination** among the target groups, esp. the primary target group of VET providers is a prerequisite for Peer Review implementation. A wide range of activities has been carried out, in the future the **National Quality Assurance Reference Points** set up in all countries contributing to this report will presumably play a substantial role in the proliferation and transfer of Peer Review to the national level, perhaps even in the coordination and support of national Peer Reviews. In all countries, **national Peer Review pilots** are planned for 2008.

II.2.1 What will be the main orientation of Peer Review?

Peer Review is seen as a **voluntary and formative methodology** in all countries. So far it seems that the whole process as well as the ownership of findings will lie with the VET providers. Given that implementation is in its planning phase in all countries, a voluntary approach seems also adequate at this stage. The formative, development-oriented function favoured is also in line with the general aims and principles of the European Peer Review procedure (cf. European Peer Review Manual, pp. 1f.)

II.2.2 How will Peer Review fit in with other quality assurance measures and instruments in your country?

E.g. with self-evaluation, other external evaluations, quality awards, accreditation schemes...

It is perhaps no coincidence that the countries contributing to this report do not have full school inspections (following the Anglo-Saxon or Dutch models) as external institutional evaluations in place. This leaves some leeway for introducing new methodologies into the educational governance systems. All countries point to the **complementary function of different forms of external evaluation and control** – Peer Review as formative evaluation alongside other, often more control-oriented approaches such as accreditation, certification, audits etc. Peer Review is also recognised as an approach which takes self-assessment one step further – a (necessary) **follow-up of self-assessment** so to speak.

However, little is known at this stage how Peer Review will actually fit into quality assurance mechanisms already in place. In particular, the relationship to other forms of external evaluation seems rather vague yet. This is, of course, also due to the novelty of the approach and the still limited practical experiences with Peer Review. Future implementation of Peer Review thus will also have to include the definition of possible functions of Peer Review within VET steering systems.

Even in Austria where Peer Review will be implemented as a first step toward external institutional evaluation across the initial VET sector, the links to the traditional inspectorate as well as to the "management reviews" between schools and inspectorate have not been specified yet. A feasibility study to be carried out in 2008 will shed some light on the possible relation between 1) the different evaluation activities as well as 2) the roles and responsibilities of the actors on different levels of the system.

In Catalonia (Spain) the current quality project with its networking activities and cross-audits, Peer Review will mainly be geared towards quality improvement and mutual learning with the added-value of providing a "rehearsal" for ISO certification audits.

In Finland, Peer Review will not replace existing Quality Assurance/Quality Development tools used by VET providers either, but complement existing instruments and procedures (like Quality recommendations, Quality Awards, external evaluations, monitoring through statistical indicators and performance-based financing etc.)

In Hungary, the system for external monitoring and evaluation currently comprises a monitoring system for the institutional level (schools), a concept for accreditation for schools based on the monitoring system and the core quality criteria of CQAF as well as a concept for external monitoring on the level of both local and regional education / VET management. Peer Review as a qualitative approach can complement the indicator-based monitoring on all levels (providers' and system level, too).

In Italy, Peer Review – as a "light" and friendly external evaluation – is perceived as a necessary complement to the self-assessments scheme and will remain complementary to other forms of compulsory quality assurance (accreditations, national evaluations, indicator-based monitoring systems etc.). In the future, if implementation has become widespread with good acceptance by VET providers and high efficacy, both methodologies – self-assessment and Peer Review – may also be introduced in the regional programmes for the quality of education and training.

II.2.3 What will be the scope of implementation (nationwide, regional, local, individual VET providers)?

In all countries, implementation will start with the organisation of voluntary pilots. The scope of implementation of Peer Review is principally set out for **supra-regional, nationwide application** in Austria, Finland, Hungary, and Italy. National pilots may, however, also start on a smaller scale. In Spain, only the autonomous region of Catalonia is concerned for the time being.

As with QIBB, the scope of the implementation will be nation-wide in Austria. In QIBB, Austria has followed a strategy of well-prepared voluntary implementation which creates a strong pull for VET providers to join the initiative – hence the almost complete implementation of QIBB within the parts of VET where QIBB has been started. The same strategy will probably be used for Peer Review, making nation-wide implementation the ultimate goal.

In Finland, the inclusion of Peer Review in the Quality Recommendations means a potentially nationwide use, though again not in competition with but complementary to other approaches and procedures. To promote the implementation of Quality Recommendations, for 2008 the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) has a special focus on the enhancement of the use of Peer Reviews: Introducing Peer Review in Finland is also an integral part of the result contract between the Ministry of Education and the Finnish National Board of Education.

The existing quality network in Catalonia, in which Peer Review will be used, already includes the whole region. Likewise in Hungary, the Quality Management Component of the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools which will be used as a basis for Peer Review implementation is a nationwide initiative. In Italy, a Peer Review Network will span all types of VET providers as well as (potentially) all regions.

II.2.4 Other characteristics of Peer Review implementation

Other characteristics of Peer Review implementation concern the involvement of the different actors (e.g. grassroots initiatives by VET providers vs. involvement of authorities on different levels etc.), the kind of support available (networking support, training, human resources, funding for operational costs etc.) and the development of Peer Review networks.

As pointed out above, most of these questions are still to be decided in the countries contributing to this report. At this point, there is, however, already a clear indication of the **importance of networking between VET providers**. In two of the countries, Catalonia and Hungary, existing networks will be used for Peer Review pilotation, in other countries like Italy and Austria Peer Review networks will be established. In Italy, this Peer Review network should also serve the purpose of contributing to the integration of the overall system – by linking different types of

providers (regional training centres and centrally controlled schools) as well as different geographic regions (especially northern and southern regions).

In Finland, no final decision has been made on the establishment of a Peer Review Network. There are plans, however, that the setting up of such a network could be one of the tasks of FNBE as Finnish Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET NQARF.

Another important approach is to **customise the European Peer Review procedure for use on the national level**. This is accompanied by experimentation of **national Peer Reviews pilots** which in turn are supported by networking (cf. above).

In Austria, the details of Peer Review implementation will be investigated in 2008 in a feasibility study commissioned by the Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET ARQA-VET. The feasibility study will primarily target the VET schools but will also include all other levels of the system in a holistic approach. The aim of the study will be to draw up concrete recommendations for the implementation of an Austrian Peer Review procedure tailored to the Austrian situation. Topics of this study will thus be: integration of Peer Review into QIBB, necessary adaptation of the European Peer Review to the Austrian situation, an estimate of personal and operational resources required, the investigation of necessary support measures and recommendations for assuring the possibility of transnational Peer Reviews. The feasibility study will be linked to the establishment of a Peer Review network and mentoring partnerships between VET providers. There are plans to start pilot implementation in 2008 and to evaluate these first pilots.

The situation is similar in Hungary where Peer Review will be integrated into the existing quality framework for schools SZMBK. It will therefore also have to be adapted to fit in with the activities carried out so far, especially self-assessment at school level. Since the Peer Review pilots will be implemented within the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools the institutions participating will get both professional (methodological, expert, training etc.) support and financial support but the details must still be discussed and elaborated.

In Italy, ISFOL has planned to contextualise the European Peer Review methodology to the Italian quality assurance measures. In particular the challenge is to link the Peer Review methodology to Accreditation, Self Assessment, ISO certification etc.

In Catalonia (Spain), the Peer Review methodology will be used to further improve the already existing practice of cross-audits between colleges, customisation of Peer Review will thus primarily mean the integration of the European Peer Review into the current activities of the quality network. Elements which will be used are the Peer Review procedure as such as well as the learning-and-teaching-centred approach. Training and funding will come through the existing quality project "Qualitat I Millora Contínua als centres educatius".

In Finland, a pilot project will tackle the tailoring of the European Peer Review procedure and the criteria to vocational education and training in Finland in 2008. So here again, the adaptation of Peer Review methodology to the national context is planned. The use of Peer Review will then be promoted first at national level through pilot Peer Reviews to obtain further experience with the procedure in familiar circumstances in Finland. This is seen as a necessary first step before extending Peer Review activities to the transnational level.

Of the support measures needed for Peer Review implementation, the **training of Peers** is recognised as one of the most important requirements. A European Peer Training programme will also be developed in the follow-up project "Peer Review Extended II".

II. 3 Added value of Peer Review

The further use of Peer Review on national level will primarily be determined by the acceptance of the procedure by the VET providers and its recognition within the quality assurance system(s) already in place. Much will depend on whether an actual added value of Peer Review can be observed. The question whether Peer Review has a verifiable effect on the improvement of VET

provision and how it fares in comparison with other external forms of assessment and evaluation calls for further investigation both on the national and the European level.

II. 4 Contribution of Peer Review to the further implementation of the CQAF

As a new evaluation procedure Peer Review will contribute to the element "methodology". So far, feedback from the participating countries has been unequivocal on this issue.

At this moment, however, it is not entirely clear how Peer Review will be positioned within the CQAF model in the different countries: Will it be used for external evaluation and monitoring – as Peer Reviews are clearly intended as one element of a set of external evaluation procedures in the Austrian plans –, will it be some "light external evaluation" – the Italian approach –, or will it be a hybrid between self-evaluation and external evaluation – as indicated in the Finnish strategy? In Finland, one of the quality recommendations is to different kind of evaluation methods complementary with each other and to cooperate with other VET providers in evaluation by using Benchmarking and Peer Reviews etc. So Peer Review will be a form of extended, cooperative (self-)evaluation between VET providers.

On the European level, Peer Review has been recommended as a form of external evaluation contributing to the third element of the CQAF model, external monitoring (cf. Contribution of Peer Review to CQAF, p. 4).

II. 5 Links between European and national level

The implementation of Peer Review will presumably strengthen ties between the European and the national level, esp. in those countries that also use Peer Review within their quality assurance schemes. First of all, even if Peer Review is adapted to the national context, the European Peer Review methodology will continue to serve as a **point of reference for comparison**. Additionally, transnational Peer Reviews will go hand in hand with national Peer Reviews - **transnational Peer Reviews building on or constituting a variation of national Peer Reviews**.

Additionally, in Austria, Hungary, Finland, and Italy, the National Quality Assurance Reference Points will be involved in further dissemination and perhaps also coordination of national Peer Reviews. (In Spain, the Catalan Ministry of Education plans to engage the Spanish National Reference Point for further dissemination and transfer of Peer Review.) This will ensure high synergies between developments on the national and on the European levels.

II. 6 Instead of a summary – a first overview of critical factors for Peer Review implementation on the national level

II.6.1 How to proceed

Comprehensive and intensive dissemination clearly constitutes a prerequisite for Peer Review implementation. It should be geared towards the VET providers as the primary target group.

At the current stage where Peer Review is still a novel and little known methodology in VET, national **pilots are needed** to spread the experience: a critical number of VET providers must get to know the Peer Review procedure in practical experimentation to ensure bottom-up acceptance.

The vanguard institutions that have piloted Peer Review can then in turn form the backbone of a national **Peer Review network** which supports further implementation. Peer Review networks will be necessary to gain maximum benefits from Peer Reviews in terms of innovation transfer and further development of the Peer Review procedure but also for practical matters such as recruiting Peers.

If necessary, **customisation of the European Peer Review procedure to the national context** should precede or accompany the first national pilots. **Evaluation of pilots** will lead to an improvement of the national versions of the European Peer Review.

Concerning the support needed for Peer Review implementation, **suitable Peer Training** will be one of the major requirements. VET providers involved in pilot Peer Reviews will also need special information and coaching, on the European level a mentoring programme will be proposed.

II.6.2 Characteristics of Peer Review

A **voluntary, development-oriented approach** is not only adequate for the initial phase of Peer Review implementation – where use of Peer Review depends on the motivation of VET providers who would be scared off by a control-oriented procedure – but is also in line with the general aims and principles of the European Peer Review procedure.

Furthermore, Peer Review at this stage must be introduced as **complementary to existing quality assurance schemes**. It should be particularly suited as an **external follow-up measure for self-assessment activities** at VET provider level. It remains to be seen how Peer Review will be positioned vis-à-vis other forms of external evaluation. It would, however, also make sense in the long run to define Peer Review as a formative and complementary approach which **fosters mutual learning between VET providers**.

Yet, in the future, it will also be necessary to define the function of Peer Review vis-à-vis other quality assurance procedures. This is why the VET system level must also be involved in the development of a tailored national Peer Review procedure. Only an **adequate positioning of Peer Review in the larger quality assurance system** will ensure further use of Peer Review and its recognition as external evaluation methodology in the long run.

Related to the function of Peer Review within the governance systems for VET is its actual **impact in terms of improvement of VET provision** and its **added value** in comparison to other tools and procedures. While the Peer Review procedure has been developed to enhance improvement at the VET provider level, its actual efficacy must be investigated and corroborated through empirical data. With limited funding and resources available, a "soft" approach like Peer Review might otherwise be discontinued again in favour of more control-oriented "hard" assessments.

II.6.3 Synergies in VET development between national and European levels

In setting up national Peer Reviews, links to the European developments should be maintained if possible in order to maximise **synergies** with regard to **further development of the Peer Review procedure** and **mutual learning** between different countries.

National Peer Review networks will also buttress further European pilots, while transnational Peer Reviews in turn may constitute an attractive possibility for some advanced VET providers participating in the national experimentation.

Synergies between national and European developments are facilitated by the fact that the European Peer Review in itself is a product of transnational cooperation and has already been aligned to a considerable extent with national requirements and needs of the partner countries.

From an operational and economical point of the view, the coordination and support structure needed for transnational Peer Reviews should also display high synergies with existing networks. The high involvement of the National Quality Assurance Reference Points in the implementation of Peer Review on the national level could lead to the **NQARPs functioning as nodal points for Peer Review activities on both the national and the European levels**.

III. Scenario for Peer Review Implementation in Austria

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, *öibf*

III. 1 Status quo of implementation of the CQAF in Austria and future plans

III.1.1 Initial VET

In Austria, the CQAF has been implemented in the national Quality Initiative for VET – QualitätsInitiative BeruflsBildung (QIBB) for the initial VET sector (cf. QIBB 2006, 9ff. and 17 ff.). QIBB is based on earlier experiences with self-evaluation within the project Q.I.S. Qualität in Schulen which also spanned the general education sector.

After a comprehensive development phase, QIBB was launched in 2005/2006. It incorporates all elements and principles of the CQAF and works in a systemic way comprising all levels of the VET system – from the ministry to the provincial education boards and inspectors to the VET schools and colleges. From a general system-wide mission for VET, goals are deduced for the different parts of the sector following a logical framework.

At the moment, QIBB relies on yearly development plans, self-evaluation of VET schools and colleges, and management reviews between managers at one management level (e.g. school) with managers of the next higher level (e.g. school inspectorate). These management reviews are a discussion between the director of a VET school and the responsible inspector on the results of the self-evaluation (and other evaluation results available, e.g. from an online satisfaction survey among teachers, students and parents) and should lead to negotiated improvement objectives for the school the next year. The management reviews thus do not constitute institutional evaluations.

Based on voluntary participation by schools, most VET schools have by now been included in the initiative:

In the school year 2005/06, the implementation of the quality initiative QIBB was tackled by nearly all schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts; colleges of business administration and business schools; as well as colleges of social and services industries. With much commitment, work on the school programme as the core instrument of school management was begun, evaluation of the nationwide objectives was carried out, and - in the form of the quality report - account was given about the past working year and conclusions were drawn for the new one. (Theo Siegl, Director General, www.qibb.at/en/home/info/news/news_einzeln/article/willkommen-im-qualitaetsportal-QIBB.html, 5.11.2007)

It should be noted, however, that in Austria's dual system, only schools are part of QIBB while the practical part of the dual systems, the training in the enterprises, is governed by traditional regulations implemented mainly by the Economic Chambers: These regulations include (traditional) input quality standards. Additionally, external final exams for apprentices are carried out by the Economic Chambers. Other forms of quality assurance have so far not been adopted systematically across the dual system.

External evaluations on the institutional level have so far not been implemented, although in some instances scientific evaluations have been carried out usually focusing on a special topic (especially e.g. evaluations of development projects or curricula evaluations carried out at regular intervals). These evaluations, however, had a narrow focus, were only carried out on demand, in individual cases and usually as one-off evaluations and thus only had a limited impact on the VET system. They did not constitute comprehensive institutional evaluations.

III.1.2 Continuing VET

In the continuing VET sector, different approaches are being taken by providers to date. Many of them have some kind of self-evaluation procedure in place (e.g. satisfaction surveys among

participants etc.); in some provinces like Upper Austria, quality labels exist. Other providers rely on quality systems developed for continuing VET/adult education (like the Swiss model EDUQUA or the German "LQW – Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung"); a smaller fraction has ISO certification or uses the EFQM model (cf. Gutknecht-Gmeiner/Schlögl 2007).

Up to now, quality assurance has lain completely in the hands of the providers and there are no official quality regulations or guidelines for the sector. Currently, a self-evaluation guideline is drawn up in a project funded by the Ministry of Education (INSIQUÉB II). This guideline could serve as a reference for comparison of activities carried out by providers. Additionally, quality assurance of providers of vocational guidance and counselling is tackled in the project BIB.

III. 2 Implementation of Peer Review in Austria, contribution to the CQAF

In Austria, the implementation of Peer Review is planned for the initial VET sector within QIBB. Within QIBB, Peer Review will serve as external formative evaluation of schools, complementing other forms of external evaluation and control. The implementation of Peer Review will be the next step in the further development of QIBB. Since interest in Peer Review is manifest from all levels of the VET system (see below, conference survey of March 2007), the main challenge will probably lie in the fast pace of changes in the VET system: With QIBB implementation only in its 3rd year, VET schools will need to have "recovered" from meeting the requirements of internal evaluation. It seems likely therefore, that pilotation of Peer Review in Austria will start with vanguard institutions already far advanced in quality assurance.

Experimentation with Peer Review has been supported by the Austrian Ministry of Education ever since spring 2003, when the idea to promote Peer Reviews on an institutional level was taken up by some members of the Technical Working Group for Quality in VET. The Austrian ministry asked the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (*öibf*) to develop a project in the framework of the European programme Leonardo da Vinci. From the start, the Austrian ministry expected not only a European added value from the project but also valuable input for the further development of quality assurance in the national VET system. Support has continued throughout projects "Peer Review in Initial VET" and "Peer Review Extended".

National project meetings involving the ministry and other relevant stakeholders in all important stages of development enhanced the quality and applicability of the European Peer Review procedure and helped to promote the European Peer Review in Austria.

In March 2007, the European Peer Review procedure and experiences of the first transnational pilot Peer Reviews in Austria were presented in a **Conference "Impulsveranstaltung Peer Review in der Berufsbildung"** at the Hertha Firnberg Schulen für Wirtschaft und Tourismus, in Vienna. The conference was hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK) and organised by the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (*öibf*). Participants were key players and stakeholders from all levels of the initial VET system – representatives of the ministry, provincial education boards, the inspectorate, schools –, also including managers of the QIBB on provincial and school level as well as representatives of social partners, enterprises and the higher education sector (including teacher training). About 100 people participated.

In the conference, the European Peer Review procedure was introduced and the requirements and factors for success of Peer Review as external evaluation were discussed. Austrian VET providers and Austrian Peers who had participated in the Peer Review pilot phase 2006 presented their experiences giving participants a first-hand account of how Peer Review works in practice. Jürgen Horschinegg from the ministry presented Peer Review as an institutional evaluation methodology complementing other forms and means of external evaluation and monitoring within QIBB. Participants discussed the implementation of Peer Review within the Austrian quality assurance initiative QIBB and drew up concrete plans and requirements.

A survey carried out at the beginning and the end of the event showed that the conference had made a decisive contribution to making the Peer Review procedure known among decision-makers

and key players. For almost all participants, **Peer Review constituted an interesting procedure for external evaluation on the institutional level** (58% deemed it interesting in any case, 40% under certain conditions). Almost unanimous was the desire to continue the discourse on the implementation of Peer Review in Austria (45% fully agreed, 53% took a generally positive stance). At the end of the conference, the ministry official, Dr. Werner Timischl, underlined the support of the ministry for implementation of Peer Review in the initial VET sector.

Further dissemination activities of Peer Review have taken place targeting special parts of the system (e.g. the Colleges for Business Administration, the Colleges for Engineering, Arts, and Crafts etc.). Piloting of Peer Review within QIBB is expected to start in 2008. Additionally, parts of the VET sector, which have so far not taken part in European experimentation (e.g. the schools for business administration (HAK/HAS), vocational schools (Berufsschulen) and schools for Fashion and Design) have joined the innovation transfer project "Peer Review Extended II" (2007-2009). A first Peer Training seminar was organised by the Pädagogische Hochschule Wien in October 2007. Further Peer trainings for VET professionals (teachers et.) will be developed and carried out involving relevant actors in higher education within the next year(s).

The Economic Chambers that have regularly taken part in national projects meetings also voiced their interest in the European Peer Review. A crucial evaluation topic which could be tackled through Peer Reviews is cooperation between vocational schools and enterprises in the apprenticeship system.

If further pilotation on a national level is successful, **Peer Review will directly contribute to the further implementation of the CQAF in Austria** – through providing a new methodology for external evaluation and by offering transnational comparability and exchange.

III. 3 Outlook

Based on the project "Peer Review Extended II" dissemination and transfer to continuing VET will be one of the main topics for the next two years. To this end, close cooperation with adult education and continuing VET will be sought (e.g. with the KEBÖ – Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreich). Institutions offering vocational education and guidance will also be addressed.

Instrumental for further use of Peer Review will also be the development of a comprehensive Peer Training programme which encompasses web-based as well as face-to-face training. Last but not least, further transnational experimentation will be going on with at least three Austrian schools taking part in the pilot phase of "Peer Review Extended II".

The activities of the "Peer Review Extended II" project will also be linked to implementation of Peer Review within the national quality initiative for initial VET schools and colleges, QIBB, in Austria. Further action of the key players in initial VET will include cooperation with the Austrian Reference Point for Quality in Vocational Education and Training ARQA-VET, which has been established in October 2007: For 2008, a **feasibility study** has been commissioned by ARQA-VET to explore the conditions and procedures for implementing Peer Review in QIBB.

Topics of the feasibility study will be: integration of Peer Review into QIBB (function of Peer Review within QIBB; integration of system level; structures, responsibilities and competences; quality control and monitoring; recognition of Peer Review), necessary adaptation of the European Peer Review to tailor it to the Austrian situation (terms used, quality areas, forms, procedure etc.), an estimate of personal and operational resources needed, research of necessary support (support in coordination and networking, peer selection, training, mentoring etc.), and recommendations for assuring the possibility of transnational Peer Reviews. The feasibility study will be linked to the establishment of a Peer Review network and mentoring partnerships between VET providers.

ARQA-VET will also be involved in the **development of a national Peer Review network**. Additionally, **first national pilots are planned for 2008** which will be meta-evaluated in 2009.

IV. Scenario for Peer Review Implementation in Catalonia, Spain

Pere Canyadell, Josep Camps, Ministry of Education, Catalonia

IV. 1 Status quo of implementation of the CQAF in Catalonia and future plans

In Catalonia (Spain) the CQAF has been implemented in the national project named "Projecte de Qualitat i Millora Contínua als centres educatius". This project has been launched by the Department of Education. One of the objectives of this project is to give support to initial VET colleges in order to create a quality management system in their organisations. This system includes the quality circle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) and self-evaluation as a tool. The quality system is based in the first step on ISO 9001:2000 but when the system has achieved a high level of maturity, the colleges use the EFQM model combined with ISO 9001:2000. The VET Colleges must build a strategic plan with improvement actions leading to an improvement of academic outcomes. The plan is to extend this framework to the colleges on a voluntary basis.

IV. 2 Implementation of Peer Review in Catalonia, Spain

IV.2.1 Cross-audits in the Quality Networks of VET providers

The "Quality and Continuous Improvement Project in VET Colleges" is based on twelve networks (at this moment) covering 70 initial VET colleges. The network is a good tool for learning from the other colleges.

In the networks a method similar to "Peer Review" is used. The internal audits (based on ISO 9001:2000) are carried out using self-evaluation tools and cross-audits between colleges. In these audits, colleagues, i.e. "peers" from the other colleges in the networks visit the audited college and participate in the audit of all the processes. These audits are complemented with external audits (ISO 9001:2000) and external inspections. These external inspections are classic inspections related mainly to the management of school and the learning and training processes.¹

The participation of the colleges is voluntary and development-oriented and at this moment the project is addressed to initial VET colleges (only VET providers of the public system) at regional level.

The audits (peer reviews) are supported by the quality networks. In these networks the ministry provides training of auditors and support for selecting auditors.

IV.2.2 Piloting of the European Peer Review methodology

The European Peer Review procedure was piloted in a transnational Peer Review at IES Quercus, a Catalan VET provider from one of the Quality Networks situated in St. Joan de Vilatorrada, in September 2007.

IV.2.3 Dissemination of the European Peer Review methodology

The European Peer Review procedure has so far been disseminated in two conferences: A first conference held in Santes Creus in May 2007 targeted the VET providers already included in the Quality Networks of the Ministry of Education.

In a national Conference for VET, held on November 29, 2007 at the Campus UAB/Barcelona, with 700 participants, the Peer Review methodology and the experiences of IES Quercus were presented

¹ In Catalonia, the initial VET Colleges participate in the "Action Plan of Inspection". This plan specifies the role of these schools related with traditional inspection. The inspection of these colleges complements the results of internal audits. The ministry provides experimental training to the inspectors in order to know CQAF, Peer review, and ISO 9001:2000.

to VET providers of Catalonia (continuous VET, initial VET, and private VET providers), policy makers, inspectorate and other relevant actors.

IV. 3 Outlook and future plans: How can Peer Review contribute to the further implantation of the CQAF in Catalonia, Spain?

Peer Review can contribute to improving the methodology used for cross-audits in the quality networks. The internal audits based on ISO 9001:2000 are focused mainly on the organisational level but not on the classroom level. The Peer Review methodology establishes the core quality areas (including areas with a strong link to the classroom). The Catalan Ministry of Education will implement these quality areas both in the quality management system and in the cross-audits in order to improve the system and to promote mutual learning between providers focusing on "quality in the classroom".

V. Scenario for Peer Review Implementation in Finland

Leena Koski, FNBE

V. 1 Status quo of implementation of the CQAF in Finland and future plans

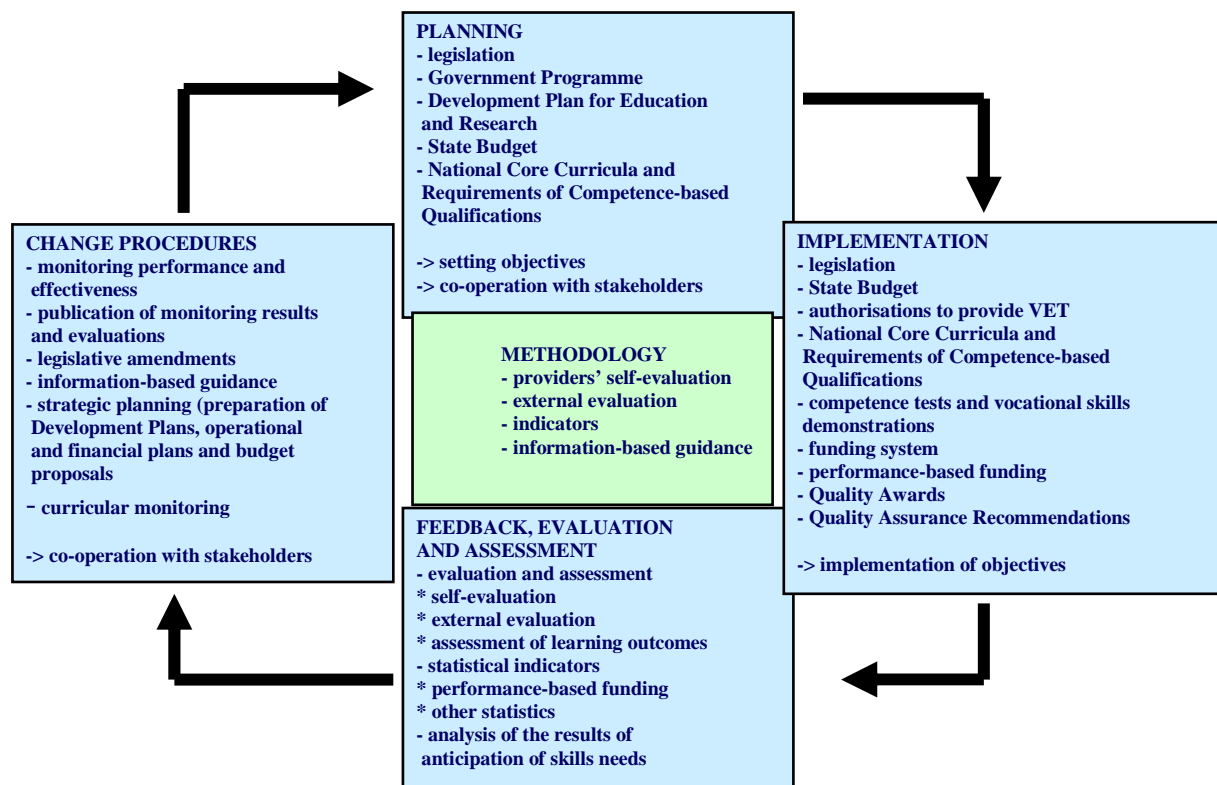
In Finland, the CQAF model has been embedded in the national steering of VET. The quality of vocational education and training is assured and improved by means of a wide range of different mechanisms.

In Finland, the national quality management system in vocational education and training can be divided into three main elements: national steering of VET, quality management of VET providers and external evaluation of VET. There are two types of quality assurance mechanism in Finland:

- Normative mechanisms (licensing/accreditation, curricula and qualification requirements, skills demonstrations, matriculation examination, financing, self-evaluation, taking part in external evaluations).
- Voluntary mechanisms (quality management, recommendations, quality awards etc.)

International policies and mechanisms relating to quality assurance, such as the European Union's Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF), play an increasing role in the development of quality management at both national and provider levels.

Graph: Overview of national steering of VET from the perspective of the CQAF model



Source: Leena Koski, FNBE

V.1.1 Quality Management Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training

The "Quality Management Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training" are the main instrument to implement the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in VET in Finland. The

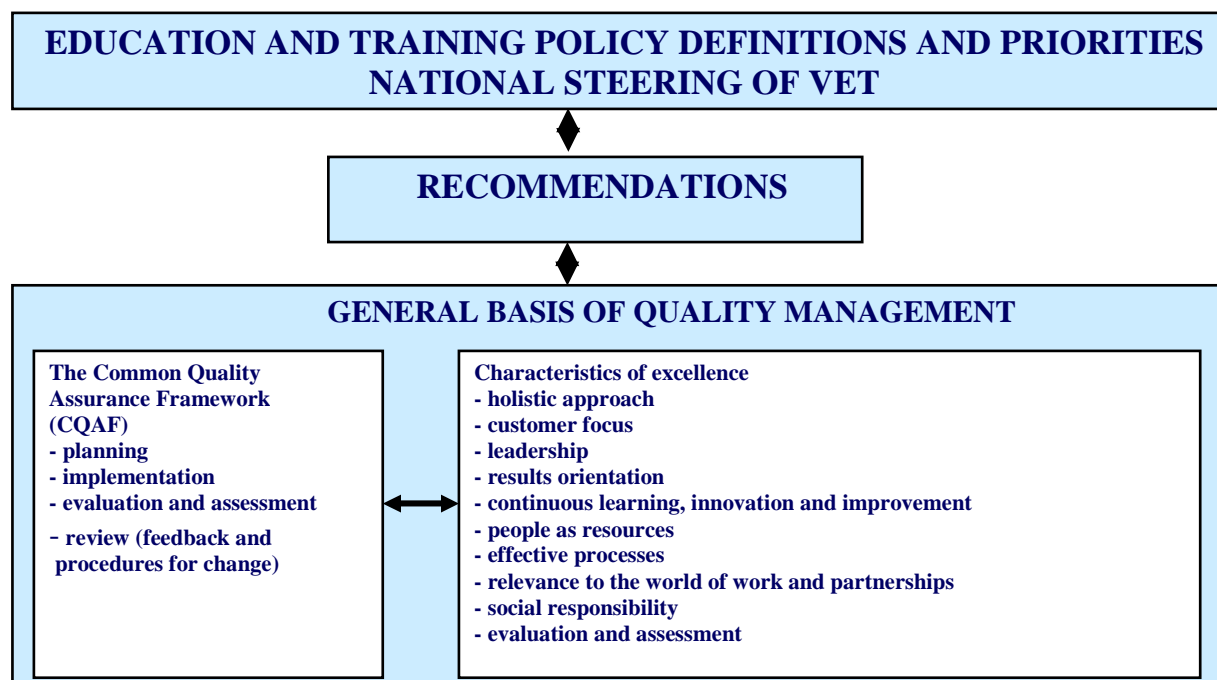
first "Quality Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training" were adopted in the late 1990s and "Quality Recommendation for Apprenticeship Training" in 2000. Both recommendations have been integrated and updated. The recommendations can be applied to all VET forms: initial VET, further and continuing training, competence tests and training preparing for competence-based qualifications, as well as curricular or school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeship training. In addition, the recommendations have been elaborated in such a way that they can be applied at both VET provider and individual unit levels.

The "Quality Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training" have been adopted by the Ministry of Education to support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations. The recommendations are based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) and form an important part of Finland's implementation of the Copenhagen process measures. The document was drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) working in cooperation with VET providers, representatives of the world of work and business as well as students.

In January 2008, the Ministry of Education has verified the "Quality Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training" used on a voluntary basis by VET providers and their stakeholders. The use of the Recommendations will be supported by developing different kinds of quality tools. This will be done by FNBE in cooperation with VET providers.

The structure of the "Quality Management Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training" is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF). The recommendations are divided into sections on the basis of the characteristics of an excellent organisation. Within each section, in turn, recommendations are grouped in accordance with the different phases of the CQAF model. Each section presents recommendations relating to different phases of the model: planning, implementation, evaluation and assessment, and creation of feedback and procedures for change. National VET policy definitions are communicated in the contents of individual recommendations.

Graph: Structure of the Quality Assurance Recommendations



Source: Leena Koski, FNBE

To promote the knowledge and use of the Quality Management Recommendations (including the CQAF model) FNBE and the Ministry of Education will organise a dissemination event, give

presentations in different seminars and provide other support like training. Information on the CQAF and the quality recommendations will also be disseminated on the FNBE website.

Finland boasts a long tradition to use the EFQM model and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) in Quality Assurance in VET. Therefore in Finland the CQAF model has been perceived as a common framework for assuring the quality of VET at both the national and VET providers' level. For different phases of the CQAF model, different QA tools (methods) have to be used.

The Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) hosts the Finnish National Reference Point on Quality, whose task it is to disseminate and promote the CQAF model as well as the updated version in the future. The Finnish representative (who is an expert at the FNBE) of the European Network on Quality ENQA-VET also has an active role to promote the use of the CQAF model in Finland and disseminate the latest information on quality assurance activities at the European level to Finland.

Participation in Leonardo as well as in the future Lifelong Learning Programme projects (connected with the implementation of the CQAF model) is another way to promote the implementation of the CQAF model in Finland.

V. 2 Implementation of Peer Review in Finland

The use of Peer Review at national level (following the procedure developed in the projects "Peer Review in initial VET" and Peer Review Extended") has been included in the Quality Recommendations for VET. It has been confirmed by the Ministry of Education to be used on a voluntary basis in Quality Assurance of VET. It will not replace existing Quality Assurance/Quality Development tools used by VET providers but will complement existing Quality Assurance/Quality Development tools and procedures.

In Finland, the first challenge is to promote the use of Peer review in VET at national level to obtain further experience with the procedure in familiar circumstances. It is expected that VET providers who have had good experiences with Peer Review on a national level will then be more suited and willing to conduct European Peer Reviews also on a transnational level. For 2008, a pilot project is planned which will tailor the European Peer Review procedure and criteria to Finnish vocational education and training. Furthermore, a structure to support Peer Reviews will be set up and pilot Peer Reviews will be carried out on a national level.

V.2.1 Challenges

For national pilots, the further development of training and the extension to continuing VET is pivotal. This is why FNBE has been keen to take part also in the next European project on Peer Review (Peer Review Extended II) which focuses on face-to-face Peer training and the transfer of the Peer Review to adult education, both of which will be useful for the implementation of Peer Review in Finland.

Additionally, the establishment of a permanent structure for transnational Peer Reviews is one of development activities needed to assure the use of Peer Reviews also at European level in the future. This will ensure that experienced Finnish VET providers will have the possibility to engage in transnational Peer Reviews as a next step toward excellence in a European setting.

A precondition for the use of the European Peer Review procedure in Finland is that there is more knowledge and experience at national level – and that there are opportunities to share and discuss the experiences and expectations of the VET providers. Additionally, Peer training must also be available as face-to-face training and in the Finnish language.

V.2.2 Activities of FNBE / the National Quality Assurance Reference Point

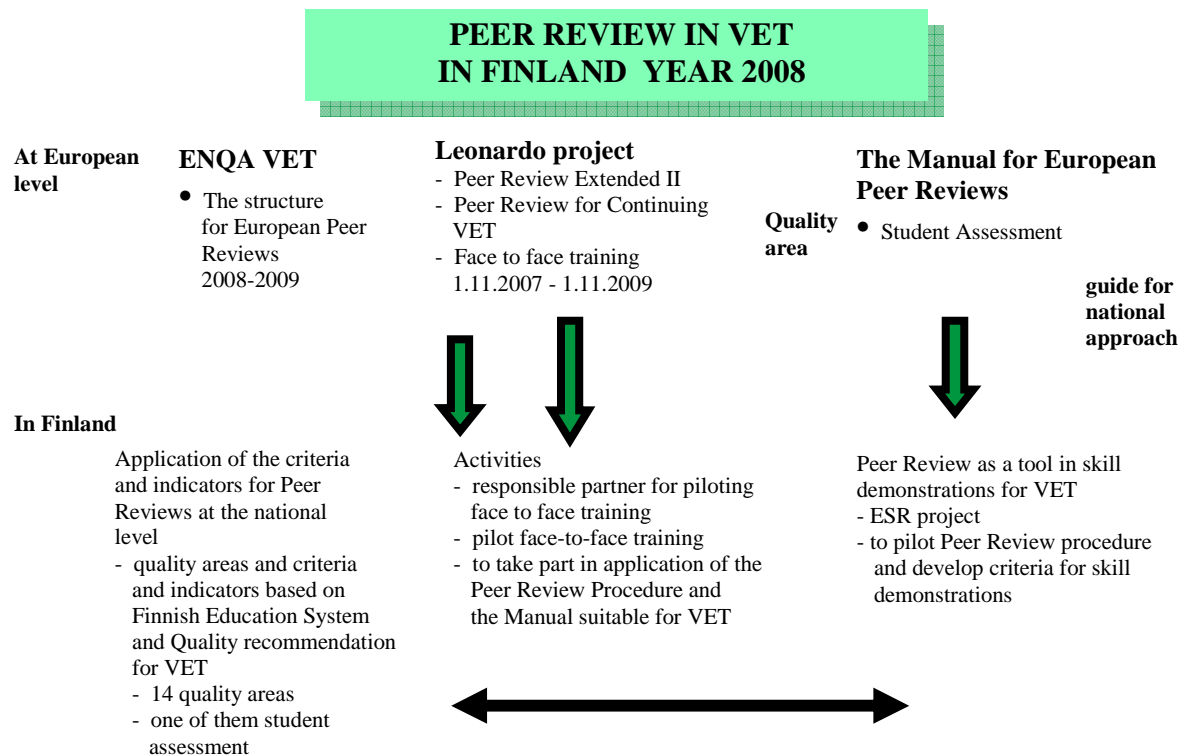
To meet these needs, FNBE organised a seminar on Peer Review on Oct. 22, 2007 to promote the use of Peer Review in VET in Finland, to exchange good practices of implementing Peer Reviews and experiences and to encourage the use of the European Peer Review instrument in the future. Additionally, experiences have been discussed in a quality seminar organised by FNBE in autumn

2007. Another quality seminar where the experiences of Peer Review projects will be presented is planned for 2008.

One task of the Finnish Reference Point on Quality in VET (which is located within FNBE) is to promote networking in Finland, to enhance and support the VET providers in Peer Reviews and to be a contact point also for European Peer Reviews in Finland.

The different activities planned by FNBE to promote and further develop Peer Review in 2008 span the European and national level (cf. graph below). Activities range from tailoring the European Peer Review to the Finnish VET system, piloting Peer Review and using it for student assessment and skills demonstrations, extending Peer Review to continuing VET and developing and piloting Peer Training.

Graph: Overview of activities to promote Peer Review in VET in 2008

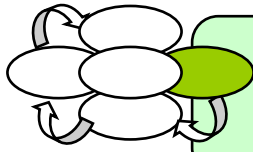


Source: Leena Koski, FNBE

V. 3 Outlook: How can Peer Review contribute to the further implantation of the CQAF in Finland?

Please look at the answers above. In Finland, the CQAF model will be a common framework for looking both at national and VET providers' level how to assure QA of VET. In different phases of the CQAF model, different QA tools (methods) like Peer Reviews will be used.

Graph: Evaluation and assessment: An example of the recommendation



VET providers make diverse use of various evaluation methods and data (such as results obtained in national evaluations) in order to develop their operations.

VET providers:

- **make use of findings obtained in other evaluations;**
- **develop their operations by means of internal audits;**
- **also cooperate with other education and training providers in other respects, such as carrying out reciprocal benchmarking**

Source: Leena Koski, FNBE

VI. Scenarios for Peer Review Implementation in Hungary

Katalin Molnár-Stadler, M & S Consulting Ltd.

VI. 1 Status quo of implementation of the CQAF in Hungary and future plans

In Hungary the work with CQAF started in December 2004 with collection of information on CQAF and building contacts. In early 2005 Hungary joined the EU activities and cooperation on quality assurance of vocational education and training (VET) and the Hungarian Ministry of Education, then responsible for school-based VET, made the decision of piloting the implementation of the European Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) first within the framework of the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools.

Following this, in the course of 2005 Hungary made a number of important decisions and took measures expressing and supporting Hungary's high commitment towards the implementation of the *Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)*. These include the elaboration and adoption of the VET Development Strategy for the period of 2005 – 2013 and the Government Resolution no. 1057/2005 promoting the implementation of this Strategy, both adopted in May 2005. In the Government Resolution it is stated – amongst others – that "It should be ensured that by the end of 2008 all institutions providing VET could implement a quality assurance system designed and developed by considering the European Common Quality Assurance Framework." The Government also defined that "by mid 2006 the 90 schools participating in the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools should implement a uniform (common) quality assurance system." A number of practical initiatives have been defined in accordance with the long-term VET Development Strategy and the Government Resolution.

VI.1.1 Practical initiatives implemented in the school-based vocational education and training sector

In December 2005 within a large-scale project the Hungarian Quality Assurance Framework of the School-based VET sector (in Hungarian Szakképzési Minőségbiztosítási Keretrendszer, referred hereafter to as SZMBK) was established with the aim to encourage and support the implementation of quality management systems in the initial vocational education and training sector both on provider (school) and system (regional education / VET management) levels, as well as to link the quality management activities in VET with the relevant European policy objectives. The results of the CQAF adaptation process included I. in general terms the

1. *Elaboration of the Concept Paper:* The (possible) role of the Common Quality Assurance Framework in the development and quality improvement of the Hungarian school-based VET sector
2. *Elaboration of the Concept Paper:* The (possible) role of the Common Quality Assurance Framework in the development and quality improvement of the regional education / VET management system in Hungary

and II. along the elements of the SZMBK Framework:

Model (Core quality criteria)

1. Elaboration of the Hungarian CQAF – SZMBK – Institutional Model of school-based VET (i.e. interpretation of the key questions (core quality criteria) of the CQAF Model for the institutional level)
 - Elaboration of a practical tool, the Guide to the implementation of the SZMBK
 - Comparison of (identifying the relationship between) the key questions (core quality criteria) of the SZMBK Model and the major quality management approaches being in use in VET schools in Hungary
2. *Elaboration of the Hungarian CQAF – SZMBK – Model of the regional education / VET management*

Methodology (Self-assessment)

3. Elaboration of the 3-level Self-assessment Model for secondary VET schools (on the basis of the already existing Self-assessment Model for Vocational Training Schools) by
 - revising the Model criteria against the CQAF, and building in the missing CQAF elements,
 - incorporating into the Model (Results criteria) the key indicators (40) and the benchmarking indicators (80) for schools - VET providers.
4. Elaboration of an Implementation Guide to the Self-assessment Model for VET schools.
5. Elaboration of the Concept of Self-assessment (including a possible Self-assessment Model and self-assessment methodology) for the regional education / VET management.

Monitoring (External evaluation)

6. Elaboration of the Concept of the External monitoring system for the institutional level.
7. Elaboration of the Concept of an Accreditation system for schools based on the above monitoring system and the core quality criteria of CQAF.
8. Elaboration of the Concept of the External monitoring system for the level of the regional education / VET management.

Measurement tool (Indicators)

9. Detailed description of the (CQAF compatible) indicator system including the
 - Key indicators for VET schools that are compulsory to be measured and are included in the Benchmarking database.
 - Benchmarking indicators for VET schools that are recommended to be measured and are included in the Benchmarking database.
 - Benchmarking database for VET schools (a database for comparison and for collection and dissemination of best practices containing both the key and benchmarking indicators).
 - Regional indicators that include the performance indicators of the regional education / VET management, the statistical data collected on regional level and the indicators supplied by the institutional monitoring systems.

Activities of SZMBK implementation:

In May-June 2006 the 90 institutions participating in Phase I of the Development Programme for Vocational Schools have assessed their quality management systems / approaches / practices used against the core quality criteria of the SZMBK Institutional Model and based on the findings of this assessment they elaborated a **development plan** outlining the planned future actions. Beside this they (will) conduct their next self-assessment exercise by using the Model II or III of the newly developed Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools, which incorporates the core quality criteria of the SZMBK Model as well.

By November 30, 2006 the 70 schools participating in Phase II of the Development Programme for Vocational Schools have completed their **self-assessment against the Model I (Situation analysis) of the Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools**, identified on this basis 3-6 improvement actions, elaborated detailed action plans for their implementation and uploaded the 40 key indicators (and the benchmarking indicators measured) to the Benchmarking database. In 2007 the schools work – by the help of an external expert-consultant – on the implementation of the improvement actions and will prepare for conducting the self-assessment against the Level II (Development phase) of the Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools. This will be a significant step ahead in meeting the core quality criteria as this Model contains the vast majority of these criteria.

VI.1.2 Revision of the SZMBK Institutional Quality Assurance Framework

Consciously applying the PDCA logic in all our activities, in spring 2007 the **review** of all the professional developments, products of the CQAF adaptation process took place based on the first

year's practical experiences. The activities related to the further development and improvement of the Hungarian SZMBK included the review and correction of the already existing elements of the Institutional SZMBK (Model, Self-assessment Model and Methodology, Indicators) and the related guides, methodological aids by incorporating the feedback received from in-practice application as well as completion of the Institutional SZMBK by developing and operationalising the missing element (External evaluation). The aim was also to further promote the use of CQAF / SZMBK by facilitating and simplifying its application. All the SZMBK elements and the related practical tools were modified by considering the remarks and proposals made by the schools and the experts working with the self-assessment model, indicators, benchmarking database, methodological guidance materials etc.

VI.1.3 Elaboration of the SZMBK Framework for the local education / VET management of the school based VET sector

Parallel to the revision of the SZMBK Institutional Framework, the adaptation of CQAF for the local level of education-VET management, i.e. development of the Hungarian SZMBK for municipalities - school owners (98% of Hungarian public schools are owned by municipalities) took place. The following components were designed:

1. Elaboration of the Hungarian CQAF – SZMBK – Model of the local education / VET management
2. Elaboration of the Concept of Self-assessment (including a possible Self-assessment Model and self-assessment methodology) for the local education / VET management.
3. Elaboration of the Concept of the External monitoring system for the level of local education / VET management.
4. Indicators used by the local education / VET management and also collected from the schools being under their control.

We are convinced that the interpretation and (future) implementation of the CQAF / SZMBK elements on the level of local education-VET authorities can help the further development of the school-based VET system in many aspects.

VI.1.4 Practical initiatives taken in the Adult vocational education and training sector

The preparatory work of CQAF implementation has also started in the field of adult training. In autumn 2005 the Minister of Employment has invited a group of experts to elaborate a proposal for the adaptation and implementation of CQAF in the Hungarian adult training sector. Following the recommendations of the expert group, a large-scale preparatory project was launched in January 2007 for a 6-month period with the aim to design the development activities necessary for the adaptation and implementation of CQAF and thus promoting the improvement of the Hungarian adult training sector (and as part of this, the accreditation system²) in line with the European requirements. The project was again coordinated on behalf of the Ministry by the National Institute for Vocational and Adult Education.

The project consisted of **four main groups of activities**:

1. **Collection of information on CQAF** by studying and analysing the professional materials, studies etc. available from different sources, primarily from the point of view of the applicability in adult training. The objective was to see clearly what the main aims of the CQAF are, what the main tasks are which it requires to be performed, what the methods are, what approaches are to be used in order to meet the criteria etc. as well as to identify the best practices of CQAF implementation in different countries.

² The Act on Adult Training (which took effect on 1st January, 2002) contains the provisions relating to **accreditation** of adult training providers and adult training programmes. Accreditation in the field of Adult Training serves as a mechanism for assuring quality and is a prerequisite for receiving public subsidy, but is increasingly an attractive marketing asset as well. While the registration of adult training providers is obligatory and serves mainly statistical purposes, accreditation of training institutions and/or training programmes is optional.

2. **Assessment and evaluation of the current situation** of quality assurance and quality management in the field of Adult Training, on different levels (national, regional and institutional). The aim was to investigate and define how the quality assurance and quality management systems and approaches applied comply in their content with the elements and the core quality criteria of CQAF, what element(s) of the CQAF is / are already in place in the field of adult training in Hungary and what elements should yet be developed.

3. The substantive part of the project was to **elaborate a detailed Concept Paper** defining the conditions and tasks of implementing CQAF in the Hungarian adult training sector, by exploiting the National Development Plan (NDP) II. The Hungarian equivalent of each of the four CQAF elements (Model, Methodology (self-assessment), External evaluation and Measurement tool (indicators)) was designed for all levels (national, regional, institutional). The Concept Paper was subject of a wide consultation process involving all the relevant stakeholders concerned including the ministries, social partners, professional bodies etc.

4. **Awareness raising activities** included organisation of workshops with the aim to make the CQAF as well as the possible directions of development / improvement known both for the leaders and the specialists of the institutions.

In case the Ministry will approve this Concept Paper, professional development activities can be started (i.e. elaboration of the CQAF-based self-assessment model for adult VET providers) and following this, in 2008 the pilot implementation launched in 40 selected institutions providing VET courses for adults.

VI.1.5 V. Benchmarking, bench-learning activities

We consider(ed) it to be important to consult with the experts of other Member States in an early stage of the CQAF implementation process on the concept developed in our country, on the results achieved so far in the implementation and on our actions planned for the future. For this reason, on **November 23-24, 2006** an **international CQAF Expert Conference** was held within the framework of the Development Programme for Vocational Schools with the participation of foreign experts invited from 6 member states. The subject of the Conference was **"Improving VET by means of the EU Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) – on national and international level"**. The foreign experts greatly appreciated Hungary's high commitment towards the use and implementation of the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF). According to their opinion the vision and the objectives set are clear and good, and the structure(s) needed for their implementation are in place.

VI. 2 Cross-fertilisation between QA developments in VET and HE

On the initiative of Katalin Molnár-Stadler, recently a small scale and short term (6 months) research project was launched by the National Institute of Education Research and Development (OFI). We are aware of the fact that the implementation a LifeLong Learning policy calls for coherent approaches on quality assurance across education and training sectors, particularly between the VET and the Higher Education (HE) sector. Quality assurance is an essential instrument to connect Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) – and to support the development of a common European Qualifications Framework (EQF) – linking the Bologna and Copenhagen Process.

According to our viewpoint, quality assurance has to play an important role, in two different aspects: 1. common understanding of quality assurance and 2. possible joint developments of standards and other instruments. VET and HE do not need to do the same work in the same way – but they have similar issues and can learn from each others experiences. Both have unique strengths and can make different contributions as partners. The discussion between VET and HE on quality assurance could serve at first instance two aims: an overarching one, the promotion of LLL, and a more specific one, learning from each other, mutual understanding and thus greater possibilities for substantial cooperation with each other

During the research project the following questions will be examined:

- What are the main similarities and differences regarding quality approaches in VET and HE? Do we need common perspectives for quality assurance?
- What kind of QA requirements (criteria, standards) already exist in the field of VET and HE? Are those standards, at least to a certain extent, transferable to the other system? Do we need common quality standards and what purpose could they serve?
- What kind of quality assurance systems have already been developed and used in VET and HE? Is there a need / possibility to adapt already existing quality tools, instruments of HE to the needs of VET, or should we adapt existing VET tools to the needs of the HE? Should common instruments be developed?
- What kind of best practices can be identified in the particular fields regarding the fulfilment of the common quality standards / criteria and the use of the specific QA instruments?
- What kind of communication and co-operation should be implemented between the two systems?

Concrete themes for investigation (which can be regarded at the same time as the possible fields for co-operation between the two sectors) include:

- understanding of quality in VET and HE,
- comparison of the common quality criteria (Standards and Guidelines (HE) and CQAF (VET)),
- harmonising the criteria of the different self-assessment models in use,
- external evaluation (role, system and methods used),
- development and use of common indicators,
- development and implementation of the system for mutual learning,
- identifying common fields for cooperation, implementation of common improvement actions.

Among the final products of the project a CD-ROM with best practices in quality assurance of VET and HE will be produced.

VI. 3 Achievements

Hungary has elaborated and is currently implementing an ambitious program in the field of CQAF implementation. At the same time our country follows its own way, the "special Hungarian way" in this.

In international context, Hungary is among the first European countries to start realising such a broad quality improvement programme covering the VET system as a whole. The vision and the objectives are set, clear and good, and the structure(s) needed for their implementation are in place.

The development activities aiming at the promotion the use and implementation of CQAF have already been launched and are underway in different fields and levels of the Hungarian VET sector.

The National Institute for Vocational and Adult Education (NIVE) – back-office of the Hungarian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour – has had the lead and been the driving force of all activities promoting the use and implementation of CQAF in Hungary. NIVE is designated as the National Quality Assurance Reference Point (CQAF NRP) – Hungary.

- Legislative background in place
- Elaboration and implementation of the Hungarian CQAF / SZMBK for IVET
- 150 schools are implementing quality assurance systems – based on a special development plan – which are in full conformity with CQAF
- These schools regularly perform self-assessment against the Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools which contains the core quality criteria of CQAF
- Development of key indicators for IVET providers, their measurement and evaluation on yearly basis
- Benchmarking database (for comparison and for collection and dissemination of best practices on national level)

- Rich professional-methodological supporting environment (self-assessment model, guides promoting CQAF implementation, training, consultancy support etc.)
- Discussion, dialogue started among IVET, CVET and HE
- Establishment of the QANRP-Hungary is underway.
- Support scheme to wider scale CQAF implementation is considered and under elaboration within the National Development Plan II.

VI. 4 Implementation of Peer Review in Hungary

At this moment the Peer Review methodology is not (well) known and used in Hungary. However, through our participation in the "Peer Review Extended" project and the dissemination activity (to be) carried out, this situation can be changed and improved.

I do my best to use every opportunity to promote the application of Peer Review. I am involved – as expert – in the education / VET policy development and implementation on national level and take actively part in the CQAF adaptation and implementation process in different fields of the Hungarian VET sector. My involvement in these expert activities allowed for making the Peer Review methodology known to the decision makers as Peer Review has been described and recommended for use as an effective external evaluation instrument

1. in the field of school based VET (IVET) both on providers (institution) level and systems level (on the level of the local VET management - municipalities), and
2. in the field of adult training (IVET, CVET) on systems level (on the level of national VET management).

Currently the driving force of CQAF implementation in Hungary is the Quality Management Component of the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools. In spring 2008 the 70 schools-participants have to conduct self-assessment against the Level II (Development phase) of the CQAF based Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools. Following this, the Peer Review methodology and procedure will be piloted in some (approx. 20 carefully selected) institutions. This pilot measure has been included in the 2008 Work Programme of the Quality Management Component as agreed with the Component Leader. Regarding the main orientation of Peer Review in this pilot project, it will be a voluntary and development-oriented evaluation based on the self-assessment carried out by the institutions. As this pilot project will be implemented within the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools the institutions-participants will get both professional (methodological, expert, training etc.) support and financial support but the details should be discussed and elaborated yet.

The 70 schools have already established their own networks for horizontal learning (on a regional basis); these networks could also be the base of Peer Review activities.

VI. 5 Outlook: How can Peer Review contribute to the further implementation of the CQAF in Hungary?

Vision:

In Hungary in the mid nineteen-eighties, school inspection that used to provide an external evaluation system for public education institutions (including VET schools) was terminated. The diversity of institutions and the fact that local demands (of students, parents, maintainers, and those of the local community, the region, and the society in a wider sense) have come to the forefront, did not / do not let the restoration of a central inspection system governed by the state. The Peer Review could mean a new approach in the external assessment and evaluation of schools which – instead of a mere "inspection / control type activity" – would provide the possibility for launching changes internally, i.e. for quality improvement and also promote mutual learning, identification and spreading best practices among schools.

VII. Scenario for Peer Review Implementation in Italy

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VII. 1 Status quo of implementation of the CQAF in Italy and future plans

The planning model of VET activity which is adopted by regional governments is based on the same principles described by CQAF; the recent introduction of Accreditation for VET providers allows Regions to select quality providers. Other pilot initiatives are based on those quality statements and on the process defined by the CQAF:

VII.1.1 Quality Chart

The Quality Chart is a voluntary agreement between VET providers, who commit themselves to respecting some quality criteria (regarding organization, teaching, processes, and outputs). The major providers' organisations have signed it under ISFOL coordination in November 2003. The quality Chart takes into consideration the four dimensions of the CQAF.

VII.1.2 Guide on Self-Assessment

The guide on self-assessment prepared by the TWG has been translated into Italian and adapted. ISFOL has tested it with VET providers. After this experimental phase it is now available to the VET System.

VII.1.3 Analysis of the quality of Regional systems

An evaluation model has been designed to check the quality of the regional training system using a complex set of indicators, which follow the CQAF logic. A pilot study has recently been carried out on three regions, Lombardia, Val D'Aosta and Trentino.

VII.1.4 Indicators and self-evaluation

A coherent set of indicators has been developed in the province of Trento for school self-evaluation. General and vocational schools have to submit their data through an online data-collection-system, and the system calculates and puts out the indicators (context, input, process and outputs) compared with provincial averages. On the basis of these indicators schools must present a self-evaluation report.

VII. 2 Implementation of Peer Review in Italy

VII.2.1 Dissemination activities

The project has been presented to the Italian Reference Point for quality (the national point for the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and training, having Ministries, Social partners, Associations of schools and Vocational training centres inside its board). In 2008 some decisions will be taken about how to implement this activity at national level;

VET providers: consultations have been made with schools and vocational training centres involved with ISFOL in other projects; Ciofs (an important organization for providing vocational training, which took part to the project) stated the want to apply Peer Review for their Centres

Dissemination papers have been handed out during seminars and meetings in ISFOL and outside

An international Conference has been held in Rome on the 6th of December 2007 "Una rete per la Qualità". This Conference has been attended by the top policy makers at national and Regional level. During the Conference the two European Peer Review projects were presented and the Peer Review methodology has been identified as a key factor for the QA improvement at National and European

level. The manual has been distributed in the Italian version to 200 hundred selected policy makers, experts, providers, trainers.

By now, European Peer Review methodology has become known among the main European and national stakeholders at system and VeETproviders level.

As a matter of fact the dissemination and implementation of the Peer Review methodology has become part of ISFOL objectives and activities, such as the Reference Point for quality of Associations of schools and Vocational training centres has the added value of multiplying the dissemination. Lots of VET providers have asked to be involved in a national network for mutual Peer Review.

VII.2.2 Outlook

There are Italian VET providers who are planning to use the European Peer Review instrument as a QA/QD instrument on a voluntary basis.

A voluntary approach to the implementation of Peer Review is necessary given the features of the Italian QA system, requesting a national pupils' achievement assessment for vocational schools and the regional accreditation for Vocational Training centres: Peer Review constitutes a complementary tool that cannot replace compulsory tools for quality assurance.

The Peer Review Methodology proposed can also become a complement to the self-assessment tool produced by ISFOL which is currently being disseminated at regional level.

These two methodologies can be applied on a voluntary base as it happens today, but with the approval of institutions they could also be introduced in the regional programmes for implementing the quality of education and training. This idea will be presented to the political actors in meetings which will treat the issue of developing quality inside the VET system.

At local level it would also be possible to contact local networks or centres to stimulate the use of the Peer Review methodology.

At the national level, ISFOL is proposing to the Ministry of Labour and to the Regions the establishment of a network for mutual review among schools (under Ministry of Education governance) and vocational training providers (under the responsibility of Regions). The aim is to foster, through the Peer Review methodology, integration at a double level:

- education and vocational training
- VET providers from north and south, which belong to very different social and economical context

VII. 3 Outlook: How can Peer Review contribute to the further implementation of the CQAF in Italy?

1) In connection with self-assessment. Peer Review as a light form of external assessment can be considered as the right and necessary complement to self-assessment.

2) Peer Review is a very friendly process so it favours the involvement of the whole organisation and this will contribute to the realisation of the Review phase which is one of the most important phase included in the process described in the CQAF but it is still very weak inside the organisations (see results of Leonardo REVIMP project coordinated by the University of Twente and with ISFOL among partners).

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